1: Haan--19 E-8 (1913-1914) 1914 FOSS Monga FOSS
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the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Momongwe-Bankwara region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the women loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [116] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

When this covering is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the

Fig. 62. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bubaie.

furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

for the most impressive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or lobeya. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. That this climax [68] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bilifidi, bombolongo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundó have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

Article VII. Monogamy

The Nkundó do not esteem monogamy. It is polygamy that they desire. If a man has only one wife, that is because he is poor. Thus he is made fun of and called mala or bokólé, "a nobody," or bofé, "a weak man." Songs dealing with this theme can often be heard during drinking parties, especially among the Elinga. All this is a great obstacle in the struggle against polygamy. Not only is the Nkundó tempted by the material advantages of polygamy, but he is unable to bear teasing. He is extremely sensitive to humiliation and is the slave to other men's respect.

In spite of all this, and apart from the influence of the Christian religion, monogamous marriages that were not simply imposed by necessity but were spontaneously desired, have existed in the past and still exist, although they are extremely rare. Here are the names of a few men who wished to remain united to one woman, although they had the means to establish a harem for themselves. I have chosen them at random from two villages: Bonjoko-Bonkowo (27 taxpayers in 1931) and Bongôlí wâ Nkongé together with the officially related clan Ilekí (47 taxpayers in 1931).

Bonjoko-Bonkowo:

Ewólé dí Ekotu of Bokanyola married to Isombe of Nkélongo;
Bokanó of Bokanyola married to Wanga of Lilwalí;
Bofanga w'Ekongé of Bokanyola married to Bolémpola;
Ikéé yâ Lokéfiola of Bofíola married to Nkéfee of Bongale.
All died before 1895.

Bongôlí:

Nkonga (still alive) married to Toyólongwa of Elánga. Even when he was widowed, he did not want to remarry, because of his attachment to his deceased wife.
Elolóko dí Bonkéngyá married to Bombélla of Bofílí;
Bongolí married to Bokélíkí of Bompángá;
Bolómbe w'ombongá married to Bokolí of Ekíla;
Lofalanga of Ilekí married to Imata of Bosombó. After his wife's death, he remained a widower until he himself died.

§95 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an ekese (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
§95 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elim'ɛ'Ámbá
213 tongfiela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ámbá, do not weep. (1) Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́ la

1. Tongfiela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc.

Mbóy'ɛ'Ámbá sɔ́fiɔ́kɛ́ɛ́ sɛ́yɔngɔ́kɛ́, sɔ́fiɔ́ɛ́ bilinga yelí yeye. "Ámbá'ɛ Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́ and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilinga mushrooms"; Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́'ɛ Mbóyó ndɔ́kɛ́ɛ́lɛ́ ngɔ́y' ɛ́ngɔngɔ yelí yeye. "Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́ and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́'ɛ Mbóyó lá 'ɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ngá lá 'ɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ndá yelí yeye. "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ɛ́'ɛ Mbóyó, lɔ́kɔ́ lɔ́kɔ́kɛ́mɛ́ɛ́ yelí yeye. "difficult childbirth," etc.

§95 Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilinga
263 (or bilingɔ́ndɔ or bɔ́nkɔ́ɔ́ndɔ́ɔ́), the mpɛmbí antelope, and the bíí yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

§95 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the
[201] shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

§95 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ w'ɔ́ɔ́ɛ́, the reply em'ɔ́ɔ́ɛ́ em'ɔ́ɔ́ɛ́; ɔ́ɔ́yá, ɔ́ɔ́yá, the reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

T.Brown M-S (ca. 1960) 1944 FOSI Mongo FOSI Nkumba

fear of death would deter him from such heinous. Another sign of the chosen successor is some uncovered coincidence, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *ekomo*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkomo Akado, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ekkombo* (a branch of a special bush) much into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *mwindi*, worn by *ekomo* is not put his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *bjogo*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkomo Akado* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *ekomo*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *mokili*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *ekomo* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkomo Akado now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *ngombo*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Barwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntoti* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkomo Akado* is about to become an *ekomo*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a "*doctor*" (*ekonga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company enters to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *ekonga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *ekonga* excels in *ongo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkomo Akado* now makes some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkomo Akado*'s head and covered with a basket and then left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkomo Akado* to assume the office of *ekomo*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

[1] If a man's fiddle do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *ongo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making "medicine", an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and as each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

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Ntomba

Now the molembe choose the Bilopo

624 *Okoke*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may [533] join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkuma Akuke* and his wife, *Nsuo*.

624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *montolo* 292 (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *montolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *montolo* is an occasion for 624 merriment. *Nkuma Akuke* calls for his *montolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkuma Akuke* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *montolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *montolo* then being placed on *Nkuma Akuke's* head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Iyoli Bokonga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe* [554] which is also the *monene mokonda*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *nsango*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *nsango* comprises the whole unit of 342 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ekunga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ekunga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making [351] a place known as *ipasa*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *nsango* is built, a permanent *ipasa* is made by planting umbrella trees (*molemba*, sing. *molemba*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered 624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*auli*) for a month.[1] While he remains

[1] *Auli* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies. the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the

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inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombeo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *wontolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a female, *Mpombe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *ebanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *ntomba lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsomo*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mamai*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nsomo* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

[1] The *lombeo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekwe* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *ngunga* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molombo* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molombo* whose right it is to give away the *wontolo* to name these sons *Mamai* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ow Iyomi Lowaw, bototo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bwoo!*'

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread.

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Ntomba

customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them. For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside, the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsomo*, *Bilepo*, and the *moomi*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molombe* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally accorded. The *molombe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molombe* and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

Among the reciprocal obligations of *molombe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given, if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited strictly to the *ekopo* and *molombe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

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This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ekunga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molombo* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molombo* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molombo*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombo w'oepiita olimbo
W'e olale we oko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molombo* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing:

Bola lasw-as, lasola olulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipamu* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *ibuto*. A third class, *boambu*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *ibuto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying